

REMARKS

This Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action dated June 2, 2006. Claim 17 has been amended. No new matter has been added to the Claims. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge deposit account 02-1818 for any fees which are due and owing.

Election/Restrictions

The Office Action stated that a complete reply to the Office Action must include cancellation of nonelected Claims. Accordingly, Applicants have canceled Claims 1-16 and 21-39 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim Objections

The Office Action objected to Claim 17, noting that, on page 5, the last two lines of such Claim appear to be misplaced since they are printed after the period of Claim 17, and the Office Action did not consider such elements. Applicant has amended Claim 17 to overcome such objection.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Office Action rejected Claims 19-20 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, stating that there is insufficient antecedent basis for the term “the cutting blade.” Applicants submit that the amendment of Claim 17, described above, overcomes such rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action rejected Claims 17-20 and 40-46 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,894,717 to Yamashita et al. (“Yamashita”). Applicant respectfully disagrees with and traverses such rejection.

Line 7 of Claim 17 erroneously included the term “region” instead of “portion.” For purposes of meeting the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112, Applicant voluntarily amended such Claim to replace “region” with “portion.” Claims 17-20 include, among other elements:

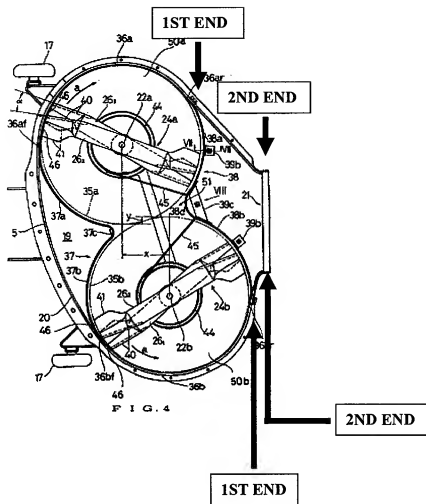
- the extension having a first end and a second end, the first end being coupled to the sidewall, the second end being located further from the front portion of the mower housing than the first end
- the second end having at least one engagement region
- at least one fastener configured to couple the engagement region of the insert to the engagement region of the second end of the extension

In the Office Action's analysis of Yamashita, the Office Action did not describe Yamashita's disclosure of such elements. Applicants submit that Yamashita does not disclose such elements. As illustrated below, the part of Yamashita's cutter housing (5) that defines opening (21) has a 1st End and a 2nd End. The 2nd End of Yamashita does not have an engagement region. Also, Yamashita does not disclose a fastener configured to couple an engagement region of Yamashita's v-shaped attachment piece (38) to an engagement region of the 2nd End. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of such rejection.

Claims 40-46 include, among other elements:

- a material director having: (i) a first end adjacent to the rear sidewall portion; and (ii) a second end located further from the rear sidewall portion than the first end
- a fastener support wall connected to the second end of the material director
- at least one fastener operable to couple the insert to the fastener support wall

In the Office Action's analysis of Yamashita, the Office Action did not describe Yamashita's disclosure of such elements. Applicants submit that Yamashita does not disclose such elements. As illustrated below, the part of Yamashita's cutter housing (5) that defines opening (21) has a 1st End and a 2nd End. Yamashita does not disclose a fastener support wall connected to the 2nd End of Yamashita. Also, Yamashita does not disclose a fastener operable to couple Yamashita's v-shaped attachment piece (38) to any such fastener support wall. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of such rejection.



For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submits that Claims 17-20 and 40-46 are in condition for allowance. An earnest endeavor has been made to place this application in condition for formal allowance and is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this Response, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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BY

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